THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) In the Eleventh Plan document, Planning Commission has recommended that the Government may explore possibility of including more commodities under TPDS, such as jowar, bajra and also pulses which could be introduced in TPDS because of nutritional considerations.

To keep market prices of food articles under check, apart from normal allocations of foodgrains at subsidized prices under TPDS, Government has also released additional foodgrains to States & UTs for APL category of ration card holders and under open market sale scheme for retail and bulk consumers.

Allocations of coarse grains procured for the Central Pool are made to States under TPDS depending upon their willingness to distribute them. Department of Consumer Affairs has formulated a scheme for distribution of imported pulses through TPDS at subsidized prices.

Accident relief

1313. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 1500 people lost their lives, more than 2000 severely injured and more than 3,000 people suffered simple injuries in train accidents in the last decade;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in view of above, his Ministry has invited international consultants to upgrade Indian Railways' capabilities in services like rescue, extrication, medical relief, restoration of services after accidents, etc; and

(c) whether it mean that the performance of accident relief medical equipment vans and accident relief trains is not up to the mark?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) During the last ten year period from 1998-99 to 2007-08, 3309 persons including railway staff lost their lives, 2536 suffered grievous injuries and 4060 suffered simple injuries in consequential train accidents.

(b) International consultants are being considered only for setting up of Disaster Management Institute to impart training to railway employees on best international practices on disaster management.

(c) No, Sir. Accident Relief Medical Equipment Vans and Accident Relief Trains are fully capable in performing the requisite tasks during accidents.

Essential Commodities Act

1314. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether provisions of Essential Commodities Act are adequate to enable States to prevent hoarding of wheat and pulses, etc., thereby checking undue price rise;

(b) if so, how many traders have been booked, for crossing the limits imposed by the State Governments since August, 2006 when powers under this Act were invoked and regularly renewed every six months till now State-wise; and

(c) the other steps being taken to prevent any further price-rise of foodgrains meant for vulnerable sections of society?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) No such data has been maintained. However, action taken by the State Governments/UTs under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 from the year 2006 is given below:

Year	No. of raids	No. of Persons arrested	No. of Persons prosecuted	No. of Persons convicted	Value of goods confiscated (Rs. in Lakhs)
2006	135025	5421	3244	498	977.21
2007	235405	6944	4872	1022	4003.96
2008 (upto 30.11.2008)	233460	6348	5165	775	5336.3

(c) Under the Public Distribution System Government of India procures and provides essential commodities to the State Governments for Distribution to the vulnerable sections of society. In addition through a mix of monetary fiscal and trade policies steps have been taken to contain the price rise for essential commodities.

Increase in prices of pulses

†1315. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of pulses in the country have gone out of reach of the common man;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the average consumer sales prices of various pulses from August to November in the current year; and

(c) whether Government is contemplating to take measures to reduce the prices and if so, the details thereof and the extent to which these measures would affect the prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The reasons for the rise in price of pulses are varied, such as, shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand, growing demand on account of increase in population and income, changes in consumption pattern due to improvement in income and living standards, adverse weather and climate change, hardening of international prices as well as increase in freight rates.

Month-wise average retail prices of pulses at Delhi from August, 2008 to November, 2008 is given in table below:-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi